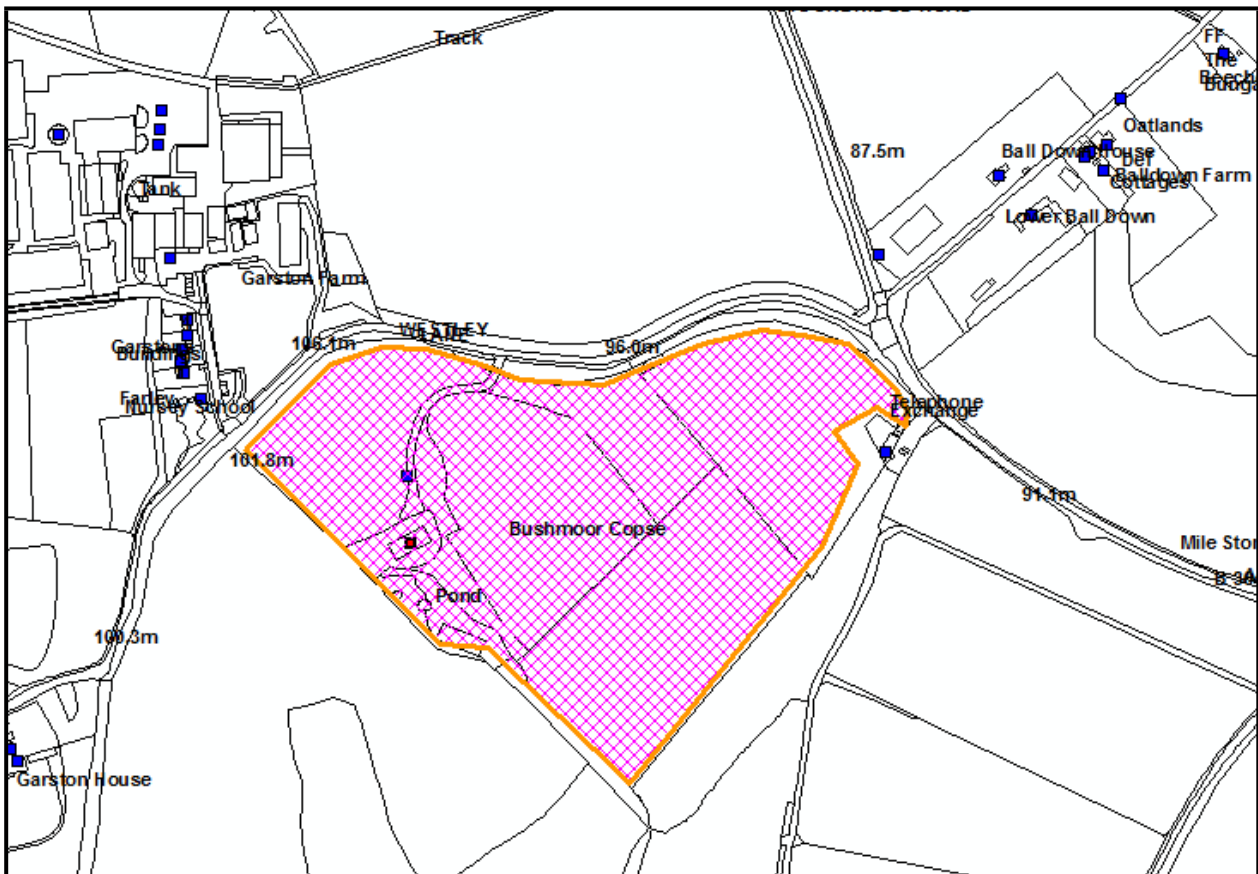


WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Case No: 18/01133/FUL
Proposal Description: Erection of a 3 Bedroom, two storey agricultural workers dwelling, car parking and garden area (AMENDED DESCRIPTION)
Address: Bushmoor Farm Westley Lane Sparsholt Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Sparsholt
Applicants Name: Mr Edward Wheeler
Case Officer: Pat Aird
Date Valid: 3 May 2018

Recommendation: Application Refused



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General Comments

Application is reported to Committee as the recommendation is to refuse permission and there are 27 letters in support

The applicant currently has temporary permission for a mobile home which will expire October 2020

Site Description

Bushmoor Farm is a mixed pastoral farm of 29.14 hectares located just to the east of Westley Road outside of any defined settlement. It is primarily a beef farm with some pigs and chickens. The beef herd has High Herd Health Status and is grass fed. There is a butchering unit on the site where the carcasses are hung after slaughter off site and then cut into joints to be sold locally through a box scheme.

The applicant currently lives in a mobile home on the site which was granted permission in 2015. That permission was extended in 2017 until 2020.

There is an existing access road from Westley Road.

The landscape character in this area is chalk and clay farmland and woodland

Proposal

The proposal is for a small dwelling of 145 square metres for an agricultural worker to replace the mobile home. It will have 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms in the roof space lit by small pitched roof dormers and a farm office, 'boot' room, WC, lounge, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor. It will be constructed of traditional materials with walls in red-multi facing brick and coursed flint work and a natural slate roof.

It will be located next to the livestock buildings where there is already mains water and electricity and in a position to control access in the event of any disease outbreaks in the surrounding area.

Relevant Planning History

08/01158/APN - Erection of building for housing livestock. NOOBJ 4th June 2008.

08/02867/FUL - New access track and hardstanding PER 2nd June 2009.

13/02302/FUL - 1 no. three bedroom agricultural dwelling. WDN 11th February 2014.

14/00907/FUL - Butchering unit (RETROSPECTIVE). PER 3rd September 2014.

14/02568/FUL - Siting of mobile home near to farm buildings. PER 17th February 2015.

15/00906/APN - Erection of Agricultural building. NOOBJ 26th May 2015.

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17/01921/FUL - Extension of existing permission for mobile home. PER 5th October 2017

Consultations

Engineers: Drainage:

No concerns - Flood zone 1; soakaways acceptable; foul to existing septic tank

Ecology

No objection subject to conditioning recommendations in report

Tree Officer

No objection subject to condition to follow arboricultural recommendations and retain trees.

Head of Landscape:

No objection – materials and scale appropriate; limited views; no additional planting required

Natural England

No comments received

Representations:

Sparsholt Parish Council – support; applicant has worked with local councillor and PC to build an agricultural case.

24 Letters of support received

- Permanent residence needed for animal welfare
- Sustainable farming good for local environment
- Stock numbers have increased
- Availability of high quality locally reared beef and produce
- Commercially and professionally run business
- Local small business should be encouraged
- Links with Sparsholt College enhances student experience and beneficial to the rural community
- House well designed
- House more in keeping with surrounding development
- No greater impact than existing
- Livestock and farmland well managed
- Applicant committed, honest and hard-working
- Mobile home cramped and cold

Relevant Planning Policy:

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1

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DS1, MTRA4, CP10, CP11, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP20

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2
Policies DM11, DM 15, DM16, DM17

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Sparsholt Village Design Statement

Planning Considerations

Principle

The site is located within the countryside where Policy MTRA4 of the Winchester Local Plan Part 1 restricts development to that which has an operational need for a countryside location such as agriculture, forestry or horticulture, re-use of existing buildings for specific uses, expansion of existing businesses or small scale sites for tourist accommodation. Policy DM11 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 sets out the following criteria for a permanent agricultural workers dwelling:

- i) there is clearly an established existing functional need
- ii) the need relates to a full-time worker
- iii) the unit and activity has been established for at least three years and profitable for at least one of them and have a clear prospect of remaining so
- iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling
- there are no other units of accommodation on the site that could be used
- v) the dwelling is sited to meet the functional need and is well related to existing farm buildings
- vi) the dwelling is of an appropriate size (normally 120 - 150 sq.m)

Agricultural Justification

The original farm bought by the applicant in 2007 was doubled in size in 2014. Significant sums of money have been invested to improve the land for grazing. The farm has run at a profit for several years and profits are expected to increase to £30,000 p.a over the next 5 years. Therefore the unit has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one year, and has a clear prospect of remaining profitable. As such the proposal meets criterion 3. There are no other dwellings in the vicinity which could be used to fulfil the need and the proposed dwelling is less than 150sq m and will be close to the existing farm buildings so criteria iv, v and vi are met. The main issue therefore is whether the proposal meets criteria i and ii of Policy DM11.

The farm accounts and supporting information has been independently assessed by Bruton Knowles who were appointed for this purpose by WCC because of their expertise in agricultural business development. At the time of their site visit there were 22 suckler Herford cows and heifers, 11 calves, 22 stores (12-24 months old) 1 bull and 3 Guernsey heifers. There were also 2 sows, 1 boar, 2 gilts and 35 laying hens. It is noted that the applicant intends to increase the number of cattle to 100 and through selective culling to make it a pedigree Hereford herd and increase the number of pigs to 5 breeding sows.

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However, whilst the applicant has worked hard to develop the farm, further expansion will be limited by the ability to acquire pastureland and the current calving and farrowing requirements are not considered sufficient to justify a residential presence on site. As such criterion i of Policy DM11 is not met. The security concerns are recognised but this is not a primary consideration when assessing functional need. Time sheets have been submitted which show the full time equivalent of 1.16 workers but the meat box preparation has been included so it is not clear how far the need for a full time worker relates to someone employed primarily in agriculture, moreover it is unlikely that a herd of the size currently on the farm require even 87% of a full time worker. Therefore the proposal does not meet criteria ii of policy DM11 of the Winchester District local Plan Part 2.

Design and Impact on Character of the area

The house has been designed to reflect the local character and responds well to the rural landscape within which it is located. It is well-related to existing farm buildings, which is consistent with other farms in the area and although it is in a slightly elevated position as it is small in scale it will not appear overly prominent in views from the road. The site benefits from a high degree of enclosure so views from most public viewpoints are screened by intervening vegetation and other farm buildings. As such the proposal complies with Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Local Plan and Policies DM15, DM16 and DM 23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Impact on neighbouring amenity:

There are no immediate neighbours that will be affected by the proposal and as such no conflict with Policy DM17 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Impact on Ecology

Whilst the site lies within the Impact Risk Zone for Crabwood SSSI and Local Nature Reserve it will not affect the special interests of the wood. The site is currently compacted gravel with a mobile home/ static caravan and has no ecological value. The boundaries have hedges which will be retained. The mobile home has no bat roost potential. Whilst the arboricultural reports recommend the removal of an oak and a beech tree, neither have features that could be used by roosting bats. A badger sett is present on the north-east boundary of the farm but is outside the proposed development footprint. Although there are ponds within 500m of the site (1 pond at 470m NW and 2 ponds c100m SE within deciduous woodland), none were surveyed. However, as the site is compacted gravel, it is unsuitable foraging habitat although it should be noted amphibians may cross the site. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CP16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1.

Recommendation

Application Refused for the following reason

1. The proposal would result in a house in the countryside for which the functional need for a full time worker has not been adequately demonstrated and as such the development does not meet criteria (i) or (ii) of Policy DM11 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

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Informatives

1. WCC take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:

- offer a pre-application advice service and,
- update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.

In this instance the application was kept informed and additional information requested in response to consultee comments.

2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies in determining this application:-

Winchester Local Plan Part 1

DS1, MTRA4, CP10, CP11, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP20

Winchester Local Plan Part 2

DM11,15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26